

# 2018 Client Impact Survey Findings

Prepared for



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**LOAVES & FISHES**

Groceries for Neighbors in Need

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# Executive Summary

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This report summarizes the findings from the Loaves & Fishes' Client Impact Survey conducted from October 1 to October 27, 2018. The survey was developed with input from the Chief Development Officer for Loaves & Fishes. It was intended to collect data from a convenience sample of respondents to better understand the demographic profile, needs and realities, and thoughts about the services they receive at Loaves & Fishes food pantries in the Charlotte area. Respondents were asked to complete the survey voluntarily and received no incentives for their participation. A total of 1,129 individual heads of household adults responded to the survey, however it should be noted that not all questions were answered by the entire sample.

## Key Findings

- The majority of those who responded to the survey was female; between the ages of 45 and 64; Black or African-American; at least a high school graduate; disabled and cannot work, and renting their home or apartment.
- Food access is an issue such that they have often or sometimes substituted cheaper foods or cannot afford a balanced diet (n=1085, 95.6%), worried about food running out before getting money to buy more (n=1095, 93.7%), and had food run out and lacked the funds to buy more (n=1090, 89.9%).
- When respondents run out of food, their primary way of getting food is to ask family members (n=498, 51.9%) or their friends for food (n=258, 20.8%), while about one in five (n=204, 21.3%) indicated that they do not eat.
- Respondents indicated that because they received groceries provided by Loaves & Fishes, they will use the money saved to pay rent or mortgage (n=438, 54.3%), pay electric and/or gas bills (n=247, 30.6%), and pay for medicine (n=122, 15.1%). In addition, over two-fifths (n=492, 46.2%) currently receive food stamps, SNAP, or EBT benefits.
- The most ideal pantry hours for respondents are on weekday mornings (n=610, 38.4%) and weekday afternoons (n=331, 20.8%), while Sunday afternoons (n=56, 3.5%) and Sunday mornings (n=47, 3.0%) are the least convenient. The majority of respondents also indicated that getting a referral to Loaves & Fishes was easy (n=701, 66.8%) or somewhat easy (n=288, 27.4%).

## Overview

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This report provides findings from the 2018 Loaves & Fishes Client Impact Survey. The Client Impact Survey was designed to gather data from a convenience sample of respondents to better understand respondents' demographics, needs and realities, and thoughts about the services they receive at Loaves & Fishes food pantries in the Charlotte area. A total of 1,129 client surveys were conducted across 18 pantries in October 2018. Data gathered via these surveys will provide greater insights to Loaves & Fishes staff and volunteers regarding how to better serve their communities to ensure that Loaves & Fishes is doing all that it can to meet the grocery needs of those at risk of hunger.

## Methodology

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The Client Impact Survey was developed with input from the Chief Development Officer for Loaves & Fishes. The Client Impact Survey relied upon a convenience sample to gather information from respondents and was conducted across the various pantries in October 2018. Respondents were asked to participate in the survey voluntarily and received no incentive for doing so. A total of 1,129 individual heads of household adults responded to the survey.

Given that Loaves & Fishes expects to serve 78,000 persons (26,000 households) by the end of the year, to ensure a confidence level of 95% with a margin of error of  $\pm 3.46$ , a sample size calculator indicated that 778 unique households (or 3% of the population served) would need to be surveyed. This threshold was met, and thus survey findings should be close, as if the entire population served by the Charlotte pantries responded to the survey.

## Findings

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### Respondent Demographics

As shown in Table 1a “Heads of Household: Respondent Demographics I,” over a quarter of respondents (n=260, 26.1%) were male and almost three-fourths (n=731, 73.4%) were female. A small number of respondents (n=5, 0.5%) specified neither. Over a quarter (n=287, 26.8%) are disabled, while one-fifth (n=216, 20.2%) are not working, but looking for work. Over two-fifths of respondents (n= 487, 44.6%) were in the 45-64 years old range, and a similar percentage of respondents (n= 460, 42.2%) were between 25 and 44 years of age. Just under three-fourths of respondents (n=770, 72.8%) were Black or African-American, while 15.2% were White, and 10.4% were Hispanic. Over four-fifths of respondents (n=922, 85.3%) have a high school education or higher, while less than a fifth of respondents (n=159, 14.7%) have less than a high school education.

**Table 1a.  
Heads of Household: Respondent Demographics I**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	260	26.1
Female	731	73.4
Other	5	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Employed full-time	201	18.8
Employed part-time	151	14.1
Stay at home parent	59	5.5
Working a temporary job	37	3.5
Not working, looking for work	216	20.2
Not working and not looking for work	47	4.4
Disabled and cannot work	287	26.8
Retired, on a fixed income	71	6.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,069</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
19-24	36	3.3
25-44	460	42.2
45-64	487	44.6
65 or older	108	9.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,091</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Black / African-American	770	72.8
Latino / Hispanic	110	10.4
White / Caucasian	161	15.2
Native American / Indian American	12	1.1
Asian / Pacific Islander	4	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,057</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than high school	159	14.7
High school graduate	387	35.8
Some college	359	33.2
College graduate or higher	176	16.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,081</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1b “Heads of Household: Respondent Demographics II,” shows that the majority of respondents (n=738, 68.3%) currently rent their home or apartment, while one in nine (n=128, 11.9%) are homeowners and one in ten (n=106, 9.8%) live with friends or relatives. Other living situation includes those who are homeless (n=64, 5.9%), living in a motel or hotel (n=38, 3.5%), providing temporary space for friends or relatives (n=4, 0.4%), and living in a car (n=2, 0.2%). Lastly, just under half of the respondents (n=492, 46.2%) indicated that they currently receive food assistance, such as Food Stamps, SNAP, or EBT benefits, while a sizeable number of respondents have applied and are waiting for approval to receive the same food assistance (n=128, 12.0%).

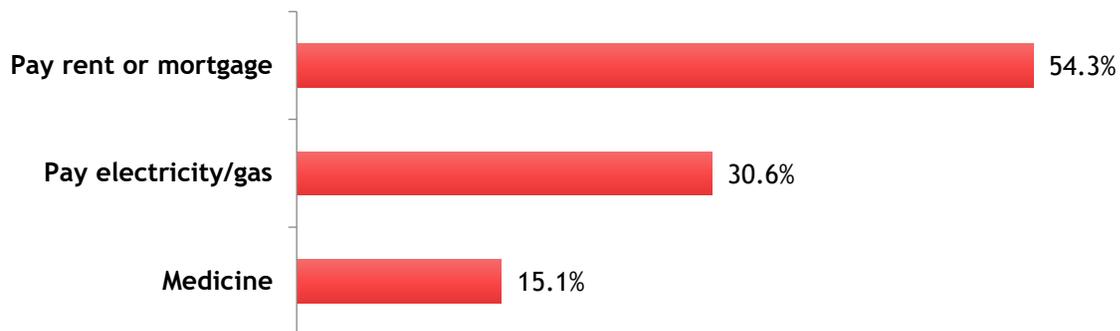
**Table 1b.**  
**Heads of Household: Respondent Demographics II**

<b>Living Situation</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Renting</b>	<b>738</b>	<b>68.3</b>
<b>Homeowner</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>11.9</b>
<b>Living in a motel/hotel</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>Living with friends or relatives</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>9.8</b>
<b>Homeless</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>5.9</b>
<b>I provide temporary space for friends or relatives</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.4</b>
<b>Living in my car</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,080</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Currently Receiving Food Stamps, SNAP or EBT benefits</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>46.2</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>41.7</b>
<b>Applied, waiting for approval</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>12.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,064</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Impact of Pantries

As recipients of groceries at Loaves & Fishes, respondents were asked to describe what they would do with the money saved. More than half of respondents (n=438, 54.3%) indicated that they will use the money saved to pay rent or mortgage, while almost a third will pay electric and/or gas bills (n=247, 30.6%) and 15.1% will pay for medicine (n=122, 15.1%). Other responses mentioned included transportation needs (e.g. gas, bus fees), not enough money to last through the month, and to support their children (e.g., clothing, diapers, childcare).

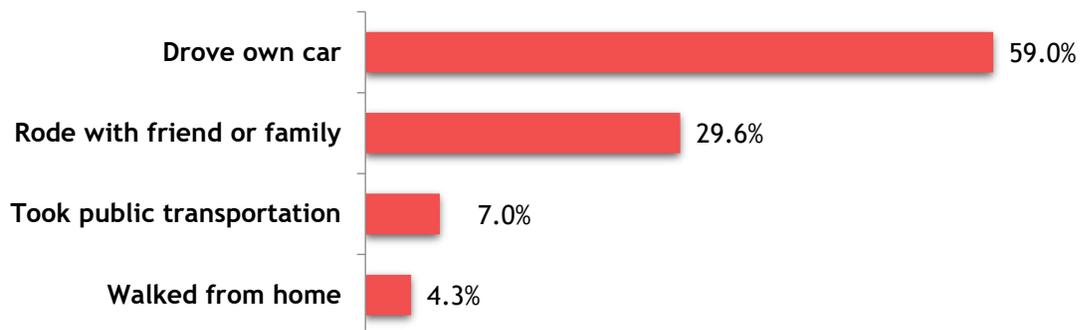
**Figure 1: Because you received groceries today at Loaves & Fishes, which of the following describes you? (I will use the money saved to...)**



## Access to Food

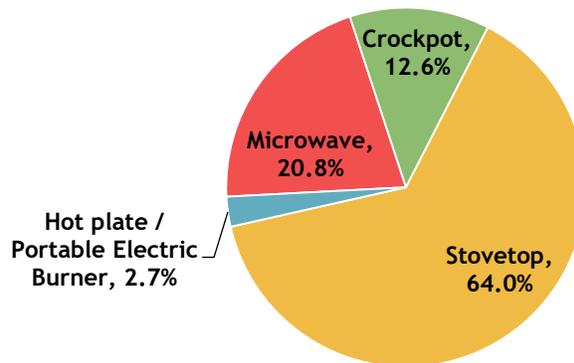
At the time of completing the survey, respondents were asked the following question, “How did you get to the pantry today?” Of those who provided a response to this question (n=995), over half (n=587, 59.0%) reported that they drove their own car, while over a quarter (n=295, 29.6%) said that they rode with a friend or family member. The remaining respondents indicated that they took public transportation (n=70, 7.0%) or walked from home (n=43, 4.3%).

**Figure 2: Mode of Transportation to Loaves & Fishes**



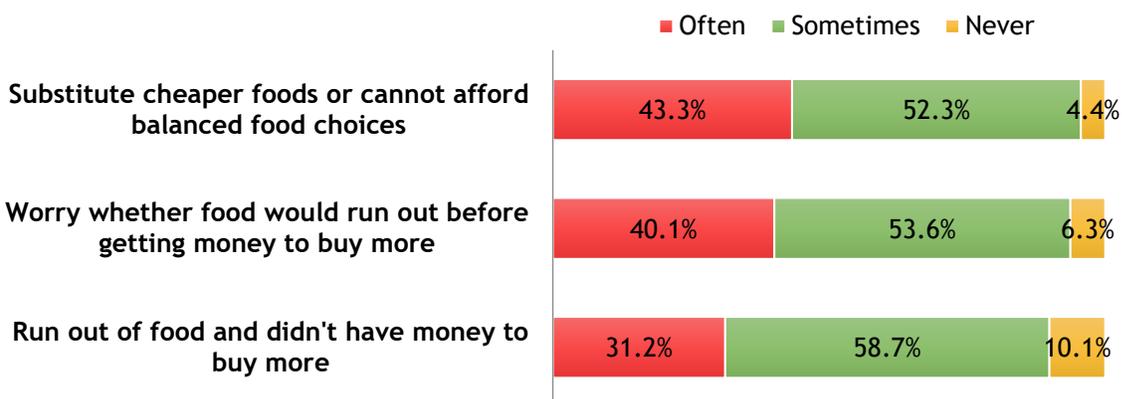
For this year’s survey, survey respondents were asked how they usually cook their food. The most common cooking method was using the stovetop (n=998, 64.0%), followed by microwave (n=324, 20.8%), and crockpot (n=196, 12.6%). A small percentage of respondents specified that they cook using a hot plate or portable electric burner (n=42, 2.7%).

**Figure 3: How do you usually cook your food?**



The figure below shows how frequent in the past year respondents had issues with accessing food. For a large majority of respondents, access is an issue such that they have often or sometimes substituted cheaper foods or cannot afford a balance diet (n=1085, 95.6%), have worried about food running out before getting money to buy more (n=1095, 93.7%), and had food run out and lacked money to buy more (n=1090, 89.9%).

**Figure 4: Food Insecurity Issues (In the last 12 months, respondent...)**



When respondents run out of food and cannot visit Loaves & Fishes, they rely on family and friends for food assistance. Specifically, more than half (n=498, 51.9%) reported that they ask family for food, while over a quarter (n=258, 20.8%) stated that they ask friends. About one in five (n=204, 21.3%) conveyed that they simply do not eat. Other comments included making sure their kids eat first, they pay less on a bill, or just drink water to get by.

**Figure 5: When respondents run out of food and unable to visit Loaves & Fishes, they...**

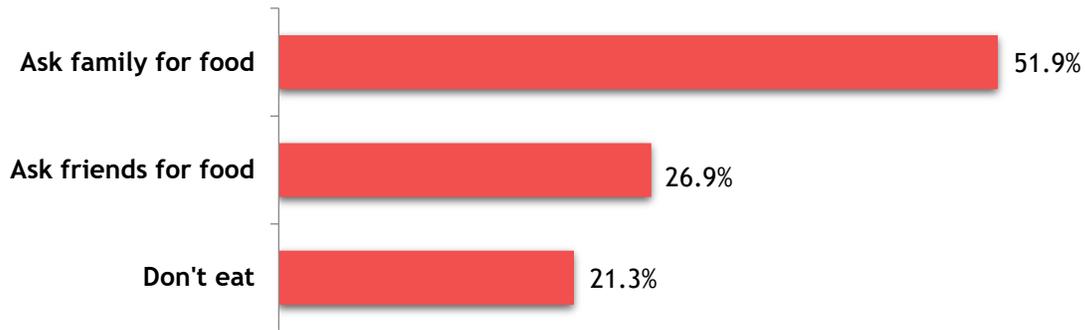
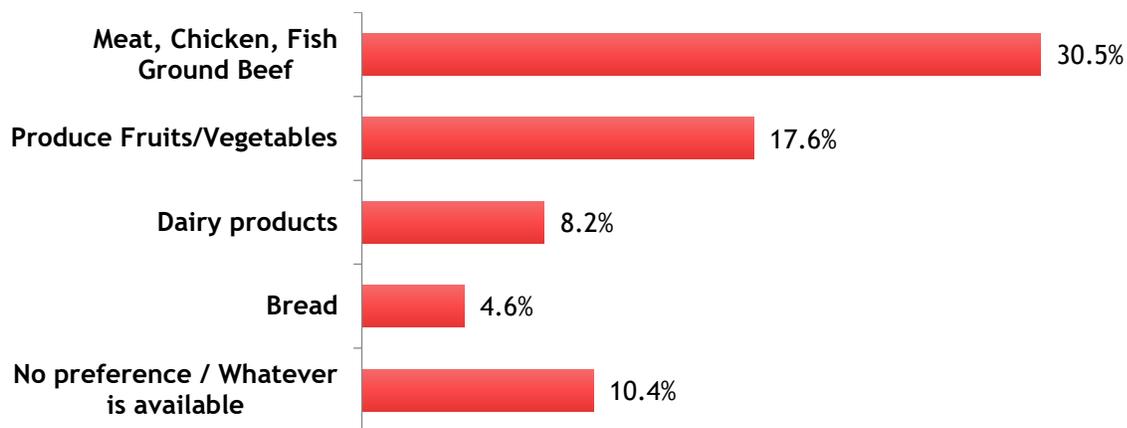


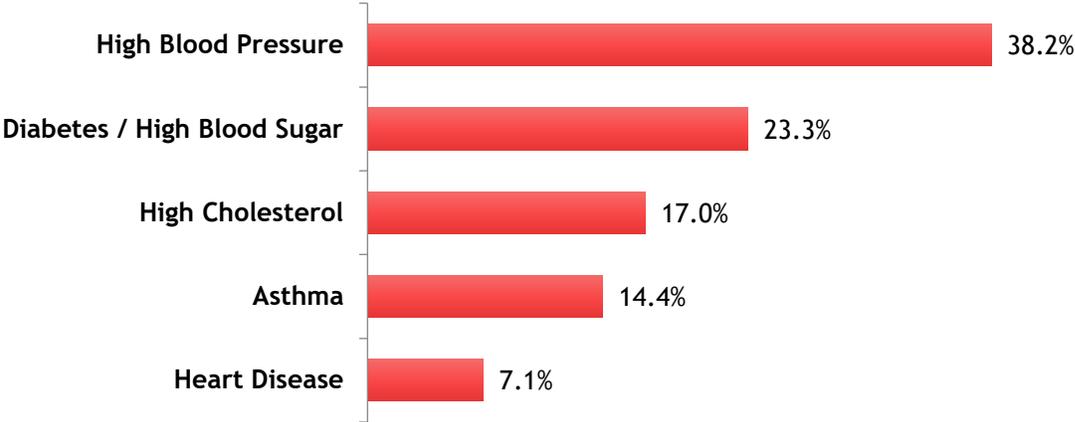
Figure 6 below represents the most common responses to the following survey question: What foods would you like to have available at Loaves & Fishes? Almost one in three (n=387, 30.5%) would like to see more meat, chicken, fish, or ground beef, and one in five (n=223, 17.6%) mentioned produce such as fruits and vegetables. Other common responses were dairy products (n=104, 8.2%) and bread (n=59, 4.6%). About one in ten (n=132, 10.4%) stated that they have no preference or that they would accept whatever food is available.

**Figure 6: Foods that respondents would like to have available at Loaves & Fishes**



In this year's survey, respondents were asked if they have ever been diagnosed with a chronic disease condition. Nearly two in five (n=437, 38.2%) indicated that they have high blood pressure, while almost one in four (n=267, 23.3%) have diabetes or high blood sugar. About one in five (n=194, 17.0%) reported to have high cholesterol, one in seven (n=165, 14.4%) have asthma, and a small percentage (n=81, 7.1%) stated they have heart disease. A few number of respondents provided written responses, which included COPD, Emphysema, Fibromyalgia, HIV, and kidney failure.

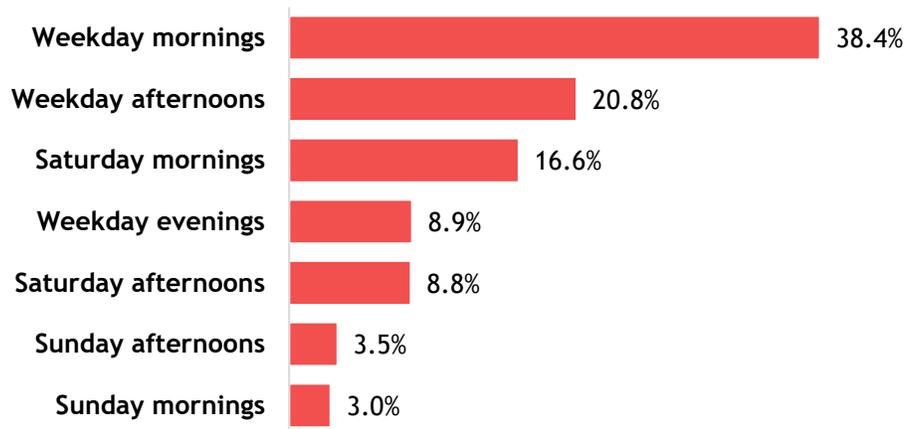
**Figure 7: Have you ever been told by your health care provider that you have one of any of these chronic disease conditions? (% Yes)**



## Service Quality

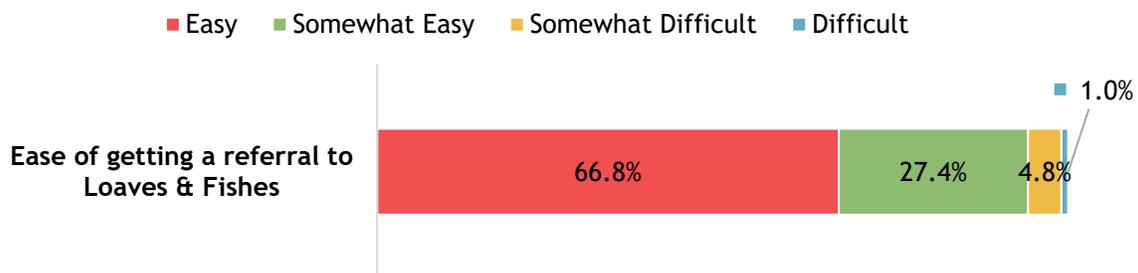
Another new survey question for this year asked respondents their thoughts on when is the most ideal pantry hours for them. As Figure 8 below indicates, weekday mornings are the most convenient hours (n=610, 38.4%), followed by weekday afternoons (n=331, 20.8%), Saturday mornings (n=264, 16.6%), weekday evenings (n=141, 8.9%), and Saturday afternoon (n=139, 8.8%). Sunday afternoons (n=56, 3.5%) and Sunday mornings (n=47, 3.0%) are the least convenient hours for respondents.

**Figure 8: What are the most ideal pantry hours?**



When asked about their experience in getting a referral to Loaves & Fishes, about two in three of the respondents (n=701, 66.8%) reported that the referral process was easy while about one in five (n=288, 27.4%) said it was somewhat easy. The remaining 5.8% felt that the referral process was difficult (n=11, 1.0%) or somewhat difficult (n=50, 4.8%).

**Figure 9: How was your experience getting a referral to Loaves & Fishes?**



Lastly, respondents were provided the opportunity to comment on what Loaves & Fishes mean to them personally. Many of the answers provided were identical and respondents took this opportunity to share their feelings of gratitude to Loaves & Fishes. Below are some examples of the comments provided by respondents.

**Table 2.**  
**What does Loaves & Fishes mean to you personally? (Selected Responses)**

Verbatim Responses
• It means my family and I can eat. It means not being hungry. It means not feeling guilty because I can't provide for my family.
• No food. No eat. I need L&F.
• They are here for my family and I and don't judge us.
• I feel loved. They actually care, that means a lot.
• Loved the dignity of shopping with a buggy.
• I am so grateful for the help that I receive for my family. If not for (L & F) I don't know what I would have done. They mean a lot to me and my family.
• It's wonderful. I wish I could donate food to help others. Maybe one day I can volunteer my help.

## Summary

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The majority of those who responded to the survey was female; between the ages of 45 and 64; Black or African-American, at least a high school graduate; disabled and cannot work; and renting their home or apartment. In addition, over two-fifths (n=492, 46.2%) currently receive food stamps, SNAP, or EBT benefits.

Survey results suggest that respondents who receive groceries from Loaves & Fishes are faced with food access issues. The majority of respondents reported that:

- They have often or sometimes substituted cheaper foods or cannot afford a balanced diet (n=1085, 95.6%), worried about food running out before getting money to buy more (n=1095, 93.7%), and had food run out and lacked the funds to buy more (n=1090, 89.9%).
- When respondents run out of food, one in two (n=498, 51.9%) indicated that they ask family for food, while about one in five said they ask friends for food (n=258, 20.8%) or that they do not eat (n=204, 21.3%).

In addition to food access issues, respondents also indicated that they also have health issues. Specifically, nearly two in five (n=437, 38.2%) have been diagnosed with high blood pressure, one in four (n=267, 23.3%) have diabetes or high blood sugar, one in five (n=194, 17.0%) have high cholesterol, one in seven (n=165, 14.4%) have asthma, and a small percentage (n=81, 7.1%) have heart disease.

When asked about what foods they would like to have available at the food pantries, the most cited items were meat products, including chicken, fish and ground beef (n=387, 30.5%), followed by fresh fruits and vegetables (n=223, 17.6%), dairy products (n=104, 8.2%) and bread (n=59, 4.6%).

The benefits that clients receive through the services provided by Loaves & Fishes are clearly evident in the survey findings. Respondents indicated that because they received groceries, they will use the money that they saved to pay rent or mortgage (n=438, 54.3%), pay electric and/or gas bills (n=247, 30.6%), and pay for medicine (n=122, 15.1%). Finally, respondents reported positive experience in regards to getting a referral to Loaves & Fishes. Specifically, an overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that the referral process was easy (n=701, 66.8%) or somewhat easy (n=288, 27.4%). In sum, survey respondents have indicated that the services provided by Loaves & Fishes has helped them mitigate basic hunger needs by having access to nutritious food.

## Appendix: Survey Questionnaire

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**For each question, please fill in the circle next to the answer that best fits you.**

1. What is the work status of the primary wage earner, head(s) of household or breadwinner:  
 Working full-time  Not working, but looking for work  
 Working part-time  Not working not looking for work  
 Stay at home parent  Disabled and cannot work  
 Working a temporary job  Retired, on a fixed income
2. What is your age group?  
 19-24  25-44  45-64  65 and above
3. Are you  Male  Female  Other
4. What is your race/ethnicity?  
 Black/African-American  Native American or Indian American  Latino/Hispanic  
 Asian/Pacific Island  White/Caucasian  Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?  
 Less than high school  Some college  
 High school graduate or equivalent  College graduate or higher
6. Where do you live?  
 I rent a house or apartment  I stay with friends or relatives who are not my children or spouse  
 I own a house (or have a mortgage)  I provide temporary space for friends or relatives who are not my children or spouse  
 I live in a motel/hotel  I live in my car  
 I am homeless
7. Because you received groceries today at Loaves & Fishes, which of the following describes you? (Choose One)  
 I will use the money saved to help pay my rent.  
 I will use the money saved to help pay my electric or gas bill.  
 I will use the money saved to help pay for medicine.  
 Other (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
8. How did you get to the pantry today?  
 Drove my own car  Took public transportation, bus, Lynx train  Rode with a friend or family member  
 Walked  Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
9. How do you usually cook food? (Check all that apply)  
 Microwave  Stovetop  Hot plate or portable electric burner  
 Crockpot  Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
10. In the last 12 months, did you worry about whether your food would run out before you got money to buy more?  
 Often  Sometimes  Never
11. In the last 12 months, did you substitute cheaper foods or were not able to afford balanced food choices?  
 Often  Sometimes  Never
12. In the last 12 months, did you run out of food and you didn't have money to buy more?  
 Often  Sometimes  Never
13. What do you do when you run out of food and cannot visit Loaves & Fishes? (Please select all that apply.)  
 I don't eat  I ask family for food  I ask friends for food  Other \_\_\_\_\_

14. Do you currently receive Food Stamps, SNAP or EBT benefits?  
 Yes     No     Applied, waiting for approval
15. What foods would you like to have available at Loaves & Fishes? \_\_\_\_\_
16. Have you ever been told by your health care provider that you have one of any of these chronic disease conditions?  
 Diabetes/high blood sugar                       High blood pressure                       High cholesterol  
 Asthma     Heart Disease                                       Other (Please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
17. What are the most ideal pantry hours (check all that apply)?  
 Weekday mornings               Weekday afternoons               Weekday evenings               Other (Please specify)\_  
 Saturday mornings               Saturday afternoons               Sunday mornings               Sunday afternoons
18. How was your experience getting a referral to Loaves & Fishes?  
 Easy                       Somewhat Easy                       Somewhat Difficult               Difficult
19. What does Loaves & Fishes mean to you personally? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_